

BILL PASCRELL, JR.
9TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

2409 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-5751
(202) 225-5782 FAX

ROBERT A. ROE FEDERAL BUILDING
200 FEDERAL PLAZA, SUITE 500
PATERSON, NJ 07605
(973) 523-5152
(973) 523-0837 FAX

<http://pascrell.house.gov>
bill.pascrell@mail.house.gov



COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

May 29, 2020

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Chairman
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves:

I write because I was informed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) that the Chief's Report for the Hudson-Raritan Estuary (HRE) Ecosystem Restoration project of New York and New Jersey was signed after the submission deadline for consideration of inclusion in this year's Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). A copy of this project's Chief's Report is attached. Now that the Chief's Report is signed, I urge this project be considered for a construction authorization in this year's WRDA bill.

Located in one of the most urbanized areas of the United States, the HRE is designed as an estuary of national significance under the Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program. There are currently 27 federally threatened or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act that utilize the HRE for habitat. After years of collaboration with stakeholders, the HRE Comprehensive Restoration Plan (CRP) was created to provide a regional consensus for the estuary.

The reporting officers recommended construction authorization of a National Ecosystem Restoration (NER) Plan that will provide for the restoration of approximately 381 acres of estuarine wetland habitat. Of note, this includes habitat restoration in the Metromedia Tract and Meadowlark Marsh areas of the Hackensack River, and the Oak Island Yards that would occur following the remedial actions for the lower 8.3 miles of the Lower Passaic River. These are important restoration issues for my district in Northern New Jersey.

I strongly urge the inclusion of the recommendations in this Chief's Report for this year's WRDA so the HRE can become a "world class estuary." Please let me or my Legislative Director, Dylan Sodaro (Dylan.Sodaro@mail.house.gov), know if you have any additional questions. Thank you very much for your time and attention to this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Pascrell Jr". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress